

Amended on October 21, 2024

PSC 464: The Politics of Health Policy

Fall 2024

TR 9:30 – 10:45am

ten Hoor 116

Contact information

Instructor: Dana Patton, Ph.D.

E-mail: dana.patton@ua.edu

Office Hours: https://calendly.com/danapattson_meeting/15_minutes

Description of Course

We examine health policy, with particular focus on the interdependence of the national, state, and local governments to provide healthcare services. The political environment of health policymaking and implementation is explored, with a strong focus on health outcomes and vulnerable populations. Health policies such as Medicaid, Medicare, and the Affordable Care Act will be examined, as well as other policies that affect health. We compare the US health care system with systems in other industrialized democracies.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Explain health policies such as the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid, and Medicare.
- Discuss the causes and consequence of health disparities.
- Identify the roles of various governmental and non-governmental actors in health policy and politics.
- Critique specific health policies and the political and governance issues surrounding them.

- Compare the United States to other industrialized democracies in the areas of health policy and health outcomes.

Required Texts

All required books are available immediately in Blackboard through Access Granted. This is usually the cheapest option and it is certainly the fastest!

No extensions are granted for “not having the books”. Please plan to access the books via Bb or purchase the books prior to an assigned reading.

- Barr, Donald A. 2023. “Introduction to US Health Policy: The Organization, Financing, and Delivery of Health Care in America”. Fifth Edition. ISBN: 978-1421446462
- Dawes, Daniel E. 2020. “The Political Determinants of Health.” ISBN: 978-1-421-43789-7

Additional Required Reading

In addition to the required textbooks, we will also utilize free on-line sites for important information to help us meet the learning objectives in the course. These links/readings will be posted in Blackboard.

Course Policies and Requirements

Blackboard

- This course relies on Blackboard in a variety of ways. Be sure to regularly access the course content via Blackboard.

Email

- All email correspondence should be professional in tone and content.

Reading

- The Course Schedule posted in Bb contains a detailed schedule of the reading assignments. Be sure to complete the reading prior to the beginning of class each Tuesday.

Lectures, Group Discussions, Class Activities

- Class sessions will be a mixture of lectures, group discussions, and activities.
- Powerpoint slides were utilized to assist note-taking during the first half of the semester, but will not be utilized during the second half of the semester. Students who miss class should plan to ask a classmate for notes, email me with questions about the reading, and/or make an appointment if there are any questions about the reading.
- Small group discussions will be structured around the reading and rarely announced in advance. Students should arrive at every class prepared to discuss questions about the reading that will be provided. Groups will vary so that you may hear different perspectives on the readings throughout the semester.
- From time to time, there will be a class activity related to the course content. Sometimes the activity will be individual and sometimes will require a small group.

Electronic Devices

- Cell phone ringers must be turned off and phones put completely away (not on your desk, thigh, etc.). If you have a personal situation that requires you to monitor your phone, please notify me prior to the beginning of class.

Policy Regarding Missed Group Discussions and Class Activities

- You may miss a total of three with no penalty or excuse required.
- If you miss class due to a University-approved activity, email me the paperwork (preferably prior to missing class).
- Excused absences are only granted for the usual serious reasons that warrant not showing up to work... significant illness, death in the family, and so on. To receive an excused absence, you must notify me of your absence no later than 8am on the day of class and provide an explanation of your absence. I will let you know if I need documentation to excuse the absence and if so, what type of documentation is needed.

Discussion Posts

- In addition to an introduction post, which requires responding to at least two classmates, you will submit a discussion post and one response each week. See the Course Schedule for due dates/times.
- See the grading rubric for the discussion posts and responses posted in Bb.

Policy Regarding Late Submission of Discussion Posts

- The penalty for late submission of discussion posts is a one letter-grade deduction for each 12 hours late. At the point of 24 hours late, a grade of zero will be assigned.
- The response to classmates is due on the date/time stated in the Course Schedule and there are no opportunities for late submission with a penalty. If you do not respond to a classmate, you will receive a 15-point deduction from your grade for that discussion post.

Exams

- The exams may consist of multiple choice, true/false, matching questions, and/or short answer and essay questions. Exams will be administered in class. There will be 3 exams.
- Eligibility to retake a Missed Exams
 - Notify me prior to the exam.
 - If you are missing an exam due to University-approved travel, submit a note from the sponsor.
 - If you are missing an exam due to illness, submit a note from a doctor. If missing for another reason, I determine if a make-up exam will be permitted/required documentation.

Grading Summary

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|--|-----|
| Discussion Posts and Responses: | 15% |
| Group Discussions and Class Activities | 15% |
| Exams: | 70% |

Final Grade Calculation

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|-------|----|-------|----|-------|----|-------|---|-----|
| A+ | * | B+ | 87-89 | C+ | 77-79 | D+ | 67-69 | F | ≤59 |
| A | 93-97 | B | 83-86 | C | 73-76 | D | 63-66 | | |
| A- | 90-92 | B- | 80-82 | C- | 70-72 | D- | 60-62 | | |

*Grades of A+ are rare and only given when students meet an exceptionally high bar on all written work, exams, attendance, consistent demonstration of engagement in class and with the course material, and exhibit outstanding critical thinking skills.

University Policies and Resources

Controversial Topics

Some of the topics in this course may be considered controversial. One of the core purposes of a university is to discuss important topics through a scholarly lens. When members of a class find

themselves feeling strongly about a topic, that is a signal that the topic is important enough to be discussed rather than avoided. Differences of opinion are expected and will result in rich discussions. In these discussions students will be expected to demonstrate a thorough understanding of concepts presented in the course materials and to ground their positions in concepts and evidence relevant to the course. This in turn will entail coming to class prepared, asking relevant questions, sharing perspectives, having a willingness to listen, and practicing open-mindedness when encountering the perspectives of others. In this course we will assume the positive intentions of all class members when discussing important topics, and we will give them the benefit of the doubt when considering their perspectives and sharing our own.

Notification of Changes

The instructor will make every effort to follow the guidelines of this syllabus as listed; however, the instructor reserves the right to amend this document as the need arises. In such instances, the instructor will notify students in class and/or via email and will endeavor to provide reasonable time for students to adjust to any changes.

Statement on Academic Misconduct

Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the official [Academic Misconduct Policy](#).

Statement On Disability Accommodations

The University of Alabama is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and need reasonable accommodation(s) to participate in this class, contact the Office of Disability Services (or ODS; 205-348-4285, ods@ua.edu, Houser Hall 1000, www.ods.ua.edu) as soon as possible. If you have been approved to receive accommodations through ODS, please meet with your instructor or College designee during office hours or by appointment to review your accommodation letter and discuss how accommodations can be implemented in this course.

Severe Weather Protocol

Please refer to the Severe Weather Guidelines located on the [Office of Emergency Management website](#).

Pregnant Student Accommodations

Title IX protects against discrimination related to pregnancy or parental status. If you are pregnant and will need accommodations for this class, please review the University's FAQs on the [UAct website](#).

Religious Observances

Under the Guidelines for Religious Holiday Observances, students should notify the instructor in writing or via email during the first two weeks of the semester of their intention to be absent from

class for religious observance. The instructor will work to provide reasonable opportunity to complete academic responsibilities as long as that does not interfere with the academic integrity of the course. See full guidelines at [Religious Holiday Observances Guidelines](#).

UAct Statement

The University of Alabama is committed to an ethical, inclusive community defined by respect and civility. The [UAct website](#) provides extensive information on how to report or obtain assistance with a variety of issues, including issues related to dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault, sexual violence or other Title IX violations, illegal discrimination, harassment, hate or bias incidents, child abuse or neglect, hazing, threat assessment, retaliation, and ethical violations or fraud.

Student Resources

The University of Alabama provides resources and support for the benefit of all students. An up-to-date list of these resources is located on the [Division of Student Life website](#), which includes information regarding counseling, health and wellness, career planning, and accessibility services.